

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

All pending claims are set forth below. Cancelled and withdrawn claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), and (not entered). Please AMEND claims 1-3, 5, 12-13, 20-27, 34-35, 38-42, 49, 56-64, 71-72, and 75-78 and CANCEL claims 37, 74, and 79 without prejudice or disclaimer in accordance with the following:

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1. (currently amended) A message transmitting and receiving apparatus comprising:  
    a memory, means for storing a keywords associated with said apparatus and a degrees  
of importance of said keywords;  
    a detector, means for detecting an occurrence of a transmitted or received message;  
    an extractor, in means response to the detection of an occurrence of a received  
message, for extracting a keyword from a said received message; and  
    importance determiner ~~means~~ unit, for determining dynamically a degree of importance  
of said extracted a-keyword and updating said keywords and said degrees of importance in  
said memory means; and  
    an indicator means to provide, providing an indication of the occurrence of said  
extracted keyword within said received message in accordance with the determined degree of  
importance of said extracted keyword.
  2. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said  
indicator further comprising means for providing providing the indication provides at least  
one of visual and audio indications of an occurrence of said extracted keyword in a manner  
determined by a degree of importance of said extracted keyword.
  3. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 1 further comprising  
~~means for deleting a deleting unit to delete~~ a keyword having a degree of importance lower  
than a threshold value.
  4. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said extractor ~~means~~  
further stores a new keyword extracted from a received message in said memory ~~means~~  
together with a degree of importance of said new keyword.

5. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said extractor ~~means~~ extracts also a candidate keyword from a received message, and said apparatus further comprises a register, ~~means for storing in said memory means~~, a candidate keyword as a keyword, together with a degree of importance of the candidate keyword, when a user of the apparatus responds to received message data containing the candidate keyword within a predetermined range.

6. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 5 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of messages.

7. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 5 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of lines.

8. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 5 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of words.

9. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 5 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of characters.

10. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 5 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined time period.

11. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 5 wherein said message data within a predetermined range is messages received consecutively from a same client.

12. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner unit ~~means~~ determines a degree of importance of a keyword stored in said memory ~~means~~, depending on whether ~~or not~~ a user of the apparatus has responded to a received message containing said keyword.

13. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner unit ~~means~~ determines a degree of importance of a keyword stored in said memory ~~means~~, depending on whether ~~or not~~ a user of the apparatus has responded to a

received message containing said keyword within a predetermined range.

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14. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 13 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of messages.

15. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 13 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of lines.

16. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 13 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of words.

17. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 13 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of characters.

18. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 13 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined time period.

19. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 13 wherein said message data within a predetermined range is messages received consecutively from a same client.

20. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner unit ~~means~~ changes a degree of importance of a keyword for a predetermined time period after an occurrence of a transmitted message from a user of the apparatus.

21. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner unit ~~means~~ lowers a degree of importance of a keyword for a predetermined time period after an occurrence of a transmitted message from a user of the apparatus.

22. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner unit ~~means~~ changes a degree of importance of a keyword during a time period when a user of the apparatus is operating an input device of the apparatus and during a predetermined time period after the user stops operating the input device.

23. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner unit ~~means~~ lowers a degree of importance of a keyword during a time period when a user of the apparatus is operating an input device of the apparatus and during a predetermined time period after the user stops operating the input device.

24. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner unit ~~means~~ determines a degree of importance of a keyword according to schedule data of a user of the apparatus.

25. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner unit ~~means~~ raises a degree of importance of a keyword according to schedule data of a user of the apparatus.

26. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner ~~means~~ unit sets, in accordance with a time period, a keyword and a degree of importance thereof designated by a user of said apparatus, the degree of importance of said keyword effective during said time period.

27. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner unit ~~means~~ determines a degree of importance of a keyword in accordance with the number of occurrences of the keyword in a predetermined range of received message data.

28. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 27 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of messages.

29. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 27 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of lines.

30. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 27 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of words.

31. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 27 wherein said predetermined

range is a predetermined number of characters.

32. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 27 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined time period.

33. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 27 wherein said message data within a predetermined range is messages received consecutively from a same client.

34. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner unit means lowers a degree of importance of a keyword when the number of occurrences of the keyword in received message data within a predetermined time period exceeds a predetermined number.

35. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said importance determiner unit means determines a degree of importance of a keyword in accordance with an attribute of a received message containing the keyword.

36. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 35 wherein the attribute of said received message is a network, a channel or a client.

37. Cancelled.

38. (currently amended) A program stored on a recording medium ~~for transmitting and receiving~~ to transmit and receive messages, said program being for use in an information processing apparatus, said information processing apparatus including a processor and a memory means, said program causing said processor ~~by to perform the steps of:~~

detecting an occurrence of a transmitted or received message;  
extracting, in response to the detection of an occurrence of a received message, a keyword from said a-received message;  
dynamically determining a degree of importance of a said extracted keyword to update keywords associated with said apparatus and degrees of importance of the keywords stored in said memory; and

~~storing a keyword and a degree of importance of the keyword in said memory means~~  
providing an indication of the occurrence of said extracted keyword within said received  
message in accordance with the determined degree of importance of said extracted keyword.

39. (currently amended) The program according to Claim 38 ~~further causing~~  
~~said processor to perform wherein the step of providing the indication provides~~ at least one  
of visual and audio indications of an occurrence of said extracted keyword in a manner  
determined by a degree of importance of said extracted keyword.

40. (currently amended) The program according to Claim 38 further causing  
said processor to perform the ~~step of deleting~~ a keyword having a degree of importance  
lower than a given threshold value.

41. (currently amended) The program according to Claim 38 wherein said ~~step~~  
~~of extracting~~ includes storing, in said memory ~~means~~, a new keyword extracted from a  
received message, together with a degree of importance thereof.

42. (currently amended) The program according to Claim 38 wherein said ~~step~~  
~~of extracting~~ includes also extracting a candidate keyword from a received message, and  
said program further causes said processor to perform the ~~step of storing~~, in said  
memory ~~means~~, a candidate keyword as a keyword, together with a degree of importance  
thereof, when a user of the apparatus has responded to received message data  
containing the candidate keyword within a predetermined range.

43. (original) The program according to Claim 42 wherein said predetermined range  
is a predetermined number of messages.

44. (original) The program according to Claim 42 wherein said predetermined range  
is a predetermined number of lines.

45. (original) The program according to Claim 42 wherein said predetermined range  
is a predetermined number of words.

46. (original) The program according to Claim 42 wherein said predetermined range

is a predetermined number of characters.

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47. (original) The program according to Claim 42 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined time period.

48. (original) The program according to Claim 42 wherein said message data within a predetermined range is messages received consecutively from a same client.

49. (currently amended) The program according to Claim 38 wherein said ~~step of~~ determining a degree of importance determines a degree of importance of a keyword stored in said memory ~~means~~, depending on whether ~~or not~~ a user of the apparatus has responded to a received message containing said keyword within a predetermined range.

50. (original) The program according to Claim 49 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of messages.

51. (original) The program according to Claim 49 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of lines.

52. (original) The program according to Claim 49 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of words.

53. (original) The program according to Claim 49 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of characters.

54. (original) The program according to Claim 49 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined time period.

55. (original) The program according to Claim 49 wherein said message data within a predetermined range is messages received consecutively from a same client.

56. (currently amended) The program according to Claim 38 wherein said ~~step of~~ determining a degree of importance includes determining a degree of importance of a keyword, depending on whether ~~or not~~ a user of the apparatus has responded to a

received message containing said keyword.

57. (currently amended) The program according to Claim 38 wherein said ~~step of~~ determining a degree of importance includes changing a degree of importance of a keyword for a predetermined time period after an occurrence of a transmitted message from a user of the apparatus.

58. (currently amended) The program according to Claim 38 wherein said ~~step of~~ determining a degree of importance includes lowering a degree of importance of a keyword for a predetermined time period after an occurrence of a transmitted message from a user of the apparatus.

59. (currently amended) The program according to Claim 38 wherein said ~~step of~~ determining a degree of importance includes changing a degree of importance of a keyword during a time period when a user of the apparatus is operating an input device of the apparatus and during a predetermined time period after the user stops operating the input device.

60. (currently amended) The program according to Claim 38 wherein said ~~step of~~ determining a degree of importance includes lowering a degree of importance of a keyword during a time period when a user of the apparatus is operating an input device of the apparatus and during a predetermined time period after the user stops operating the input device.

61. (currently amended) The program according to Claim 38 wherein said ~~step of~~ determining a degree of importance includes determining a degree of importance of a keyword according to schedule data of a user of the apparatus.

62. (currently amended) The program according to Claim 38 wherein said ~~step of~~ determining a degree of importance includes raising a degree of importance of a keyword according to schedule data of a user of the apparatus.

63. (currently amended) The program according to Claim 38 wherein said ~~step of~~ determining a degree of importance includes setting, in accordance with a time period, a



keyword and a degree of importance thereof designated by a user of said apparatus, the degree of importance of said keyword effective during said time period.

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64. (currently amended) The program according to Claim 38 wherein said ~~step of~~ determining a degree of importance includes determining a degree of importance of a keyword in accordance with the number of occurrences of the keyword in a predetermined range of received message data.

65. (original) The program according to Claim 64 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of messages.

66. (original) The program according to Claim 64 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of lines.

67. (original) The program according to Claim 64 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of words.

68. (original) The program according to Claim 64 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined number of characters.

69. (original) The program according to Claim 64 wherein said predetermined range is a predetermined time period.

70. (original) The program according to Claim 64 wherein said message data within a predetermined range is messages received consecutively from a same client.

71. (currently amended) The program according to Claim 38 wherein said ~~step of~~ determining a degree of importance includes lowering a degree of importance of a keyword when the number of occurrences of the keyword in received message data within a predetermined time period exceeds a predetermined number.

72. (currently amended) The program according to Claim 38 wherein said ~~step of~~ determining a degree of importance includes determining a degree of importance of a keyword in accordance with an attribute of a received message containing the keyword.

73. (original) The program according to Claim 38 wherein the attribute of said received message is a network, a channel or a client.

74. Cancelled

75. (currently amended) A method ~~for processing~~ to process a keyword in a message transmitting and receiving ~~apparatus system~~, comprising ~~the steps of~~:  
detecting an occurrence of a transmitted or received message;  
extracting, in response to the detection of an occurrence of a received message, a keyword from said a-received message;  
dynamically determining a degree of importance of said a-extracted keyword to update keywords associated with said apparatus and degrees of importance of the keywords stored in a memory; and  
~~storing a keyword and a degree of importance thereof in memory means~~  
providing an indication of the occurrence of said extracted keyword within said received message in accordance with the determined degree of importance of said extracted keyword.

76. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 75 wherein said ~~step of~~ determining a degree of importance determines a degree of importance of a keyword stored in said memory ~~means~~, depending on whether ~~or not~~ a user of the system has responded to a received message containing said keyword within a predetermined range.

77. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 75 wherein said ~~step of~~ determining a degree of importance includes setting, in accordance with a time period, a keyword and a degree of importance thereof designated by a user of said apparatus, the degree of importance of said keyword effective during said time period.

78. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 75 wherein said ~~step of~~ determining a degree of importance includes determining a degree of importance of a keyword in accordance with an attribute of a received message containing the keyword.

79. Cancelled.